

STARK INTRODUCES PAID FAMILY LEAVE LEGISLATION

Wednesday, 25 March 2009

Representatives Pete Stark (D-CA), George Miller (D-CA), Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) today introduced the Family Leave Insurance Act of 2009, to provide 12 weeks of paid benefits to workers who need to take time off to care for an ill family member, a new child, or because of their own illness.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

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Bill will provide workers with 12 weeks of paid benefits

WASHINGTON- Representatives Pete Stark (D-CA), George Miller (D-CA), Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) today introduced the Family Leave Insurance Act of 2009, to provide 12 weeks of paid benefits to workers who need to take time off to care for an ill family member, a new child, or because of their own illness. The Family Leave Insurance Act of 2009 builds on the success of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, which has provided job security to more than 100 million Americans who have taken family leave from their jobs.

Rep. Stark, Chair of the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee: "If we want to help people through this recession, we need to make sure that workers can maintain their incomes without sacrificing their families' needs. The Family Leave Insurance Act will provide paid family leave for workers, which will mean healthier children, stronger families, and more competitive businesses."

Rep. Miller, Chair of the House Education and Labor Committee: "Millions of American workers are all too often put in the position of choosing between getting paid and dealing with an illness or welcoming a new child to the family. Americans shouldn't have to make that choice. Family-friendly policies like guaranteed paid leave not only help parents balance work and family, but also improve employers' bottom lines. When workers can take advantage of these family-friendly policies, their employers benefit from increased recruitment and retention rates, decreased absenteeism and improved productivity."

Rep. Woolsey, Chair of the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections: "Investing in

working families is the best way to strengthen our workforce, our economy, and our country. Even the most generous leave policies don't help the millions of families who cannot afford to take leave from their jobs without pay. That's why we must support working families by providing them the flexibility to balance work and family obligations. In a country as rich as ours, workers shouldn't be prevented from caring for a sick child, an elderly parent, or an ill spouse simply because they can't afford to take advantage of the family leave they have earned and deserve."

Rep. Maloney, Chair of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit: "There couldn't be a worse time than during an economic downturn to ask parents to choose between a paycheck and their new child or sick family member. Tough times call for strong supports for working families, like paid family and medical leave."

The legislation will:

- Provide all workers with 12 weeks of paid leave over a 12-month period to care for a new child, provide for an ill family member, treat their own illness, care for a wounded veteran, or deal with the deployment of a family member;
- Provide these benefits through a new trust fund that is financed equally by employers and employees, who will each contribute 0.2% of the employee's pay (for the average worker, less than \$7 a month);
- Progressively tier the benefits so that a low wage worker (earning less than \$30,000) will receive full or near full salary replacement, middle income workers (\$30,000- \$60,000) receive 55% wage replacement, and higher earners (over \$60,000) receive 40-45%, with the benefit capped at approximately \$800 per week;
- Administer the program through the Department of Labor which will contract with states to administer the program (similar to how the Unemployment Insurance program is run);
- Allow states and businesses with materially equivalent or better benefits to opt-out of the program.

To view a complete summary of the bill, bill text, and letters from endorsing groups, click here:
http://www.stark.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1081&Itemid=93

This legislation has been endorsed by many organizations, including the National Partnership for Women and Families, the Human Rights Campaign, Voices for America's Children, and the American Psychological Association.

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